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## Wushu standout takes childhood obsession to world stage

Sports

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Wilson Lui says a good segment of his social life as a youth was far different from others his age.

While many of his friends would go out and play when they weren't attending school, Lui would spend a good portion of his leisure time attending martial arts classes specializing in wushu.

Today, the 19-year-old Markham resident is glad he took that route.

When the 2009 World Wushu Championships commence today at the Ricoh Coliseum in Toronto, Lui will be centre stage.

As one of five athletes representing Team Canada at this six-day event, Lui will compete in the non-combative segment of this martial arts discipline.

Earning a berth on the national team through qualifications at the national championships in Newmarket in August, Lui is entered in three events including barehanded long fist (changquan), short weapon-double edged sword (jianshu) and long weapons-spear (qiangshu).

"This is my first time to compete at the world championships and it's pretty amazing," he said.

Lui is no stranger to international competition having participated last year in the World Junior Wushu Championships in Bali, Indonesia. He felt he gave a good account of himself after placing in the top eight in two events and top 15 in another.

Taking a realistic approach to the upcoming world championships, Lui doesn't expect to come away with a gold medal.

"But I expect to go out and do the best that I can," he said.

A second-year computer science student at York University when he's not practicing, Lui's introduction to the martial arts took place 14 years ago when as a youngster, he had a fixation to the TV set whenever any martial arts programs were on the airwaves.

"I wouldn't blink an eye whenever those action movies came on," he recalled. "My parents thought it would be a good idea to attend those classes because it would teach me some discipline."

Attending the Sunny Tang Martial Arts Centre in Scarborough since Day One, Lui said he would spend a whole day, providing there was no school, nurturing his craft.

For the upcoming world championships, Lui said his daily training schedule goes from 6 to 8 a.m. before going to school and then returning home to train for a few more hours.

In explaining his love for wushu, Lui said there's always something new to be learned.

"There's no way to be completely perfect at it because there's always something you can work on," he explained.

- Michael Hayakawa

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